



The Torch

Keeping the Promise

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Vietnam Veteran searches for answers on uncle missing from Korean War

"When I was 10 years old, my uncle Tracy went missing during the Korean War," said retired, disabled Air Force Vietnam veteran Roy Yarbrough, who attended the Houston family member update Feb. 22, 2014.

His uncle, Cpl. Tracy R. Roden, was assigned to Battery C, 15th Field Artillery, 2nd Infantry Division, when North Koreans ambushed his unit, near the town of Angang-ri, South Korea.

On Aug. 11, 1950, the North Koreans launched an attack on Battery C's vehicles from high ground where the road ran between the base of a steep mountain and a river. It was during this attack, that Roden was reported missing.

"My uncle went missing in action in August 1950," said Yarbrough. "He was not declared dead until February 1954, so for almost four years my family did not know what happened. We still do not have closure and he has not been found."

Roden, also a World War II veteran, never married or had children, volunteered for the Korean War and served his country with honor. "We are a military family," said Yarbrough. "My grandmother had a fit when my uncle signed up again for the Korean War. She had three sons who served in the military."

More than 7,800 service members are still missing from the Korean War and the families of these service members still hope to bring them home or to know what happened when their loved one paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Yarbrough said he came to the family update in Houston to learn information about his Uncle and how he was lost.

"Today I learned that my uncle was a POW for a short time," said Yarbrough. "I also learned that he was on a march to protect an airfield when his unit was ambushed."

DPMO conducts six to eight briefings a year throughout the U.S. and the meetings are designed to provide information to family members



Photo and story by Sgt. 1st Class Sheila L. Sledge

Roy Yarbrough, a retired Air Force Vietnam veteran, shows off things he has of his uncle who went missing during the Korean War Feb. 22, 2014 at the Houston Family Member Update. His uncle Tracy Roden went missing August 1950 in North Korea.

on their loved one who went missing during past conflicts.

Since 1995, the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) and the Personnel Accounting Community partners have briefed more than 14,000 family members on the U.S. government's effort to account for their missing loved ones.

We are happy to be here and get this information, said Jeane Yarbrough as she sat next to her husband.

"To bring him home would be nice," said Yarbrough.

Family Updates

The Family Member Update (FMU) program reached 833 family members in 2013. Of that total, 489 were first time attendees. The FMU program continues to successfully inform family members of the work being done to bring home their missing loved ones. If you have not attended an FMU, we hope you will be able to join us at one in 2014. Invitations are sent to family members within a 350 mile radius around the city where the event takes place. If you are a family member and you do not receive an invitation, you are welcome to attend by registering on our webpage at www.dtic.mil/dpmo.

2014 Updates for families with loved ones missing in action will be conducted on:

April 12 – Las Vegas

May 17 – Minneapolis, Minn.

June 12-13 – Southeast Asia Annual Meeting, D.C.

August 14-15 – Korean/Cold War Annual Meeting, D.C.

September 13 – Pittsburgh

To register or find more information, see our webpage:
www.dtic.mil/dpmo

Vietnam Veteran's Day

January 2014, marked the 41st anniversary of the signing of the Agreement Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam, more commonly known as the Paris Peace Accords. This arrangement officially began the accounting process for our missing service members from Vietnam War. As a direct result of the Paris Peace Accords, the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) was established to pursue the accounting mission in Southeast Asia. December 2013, marked a tragic anniversary in the history of the accounting mission in Vietnam. On Dec. 15, 1973, JCRC Capt. Richard Rees and an Army of the Republic of Vietnam soldier were killed in a Viet Cong ambush outside of then Saigon as they investigated a U.S. loss incident.

For many years, the name of the heroic Vietnamese soldier that died on that mission with Reese went unknown. That is until now. Through the diligent efforts of a Vietnamese language instructor at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., and two of her DPMO students, we have been able to determine that Sgt. Nguyen Van Hai, was the other fatality on that mission. Plans are being formulated to add Hai's name to the memorial plaque at DPMO commemorating those Americans and individuals of other countries who have given their life in support of America's efforts to account for its missing personnel.

U.S.-Russia Joint Commission

On Dec. 11, 2013, the U.S. side of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC) held its first meeting since June 2010. Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, USAF (Ret.), the U.S. Co-Chair of the USRJC, introduced the newly appointed members, including DASD Winfield, as the DoD commissioner. Foglesong then led a discussion on the U.S. side's organization and his plans to re-energize the work of the commission. DPMO provided an overview on the working relationship between DoD and the commission and what the commission can do to facilitate the personnel accounting mission.

March 26, 2014 marked the 22nd anniversary of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC). On this date in 1992, the first plenary session of the USRJC took place in Moscow, Russia. We gratefully acknowledge the many contributions made by the commission to our shared mission of accounting for our missing and informing their families and the public.

Recently accounted for

The following servicemen were recently accounted for as of April 1, 2014 and returned to their families for burial with full military honors:

WWII

Pfc. William T. Carneal,
USA
2nd Lt. Verne L. Gibb,
USAF

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph E.
Gantt, USA
Pfc. James R. Holmes,
USA
Cpl. Joe W. Howard,
USA

Korean War

Cpl. William S. Blasdel,
USMC
Pfc. Jerry P. Craig, USA
Cpl. William F. Day, USA
Pfc. Donald C. Durfee,
USA

Sgt. 1st Class John C.
Keller, USA
Cpl. Cletus R. Lies, USA
Cpl. William A. Newton,
USA
Cpl. Cristobal Romo,
USA



DPMO launched a Twitter account to help highlight the work of DPMO and the Accounting Community to account for more than 83,000 missing Americans from past conflicts.

Follow DPMO @DoDPOWMIA

South Korea officials visit DPMO

On Nov. 18 and 19, 2013, the DPMO hosted a visit by the Republic of Korea (ROK) Ministry of National Defense (MND), Deputy Minister (DM) for Personnel and Welfare, Park Dae-Sub, and the newly appointed commander of MND Agency for KIA Recovery and Identification (MAKRI), Col. Yoo Cha-Yeong, and MND and MAKRI staff members. DPMO had three objectives for the visit. The first was to maintain and build upon the past friendly, productive, and effective working relationship between the Department of Defense and ROK MND. The second was to build upon the already effective working relationship and co-operation that exists between DPMO and ROK MND. The third was to reinforce the strong operational relationship between MAKRI and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) on the Korean War personnel accounting issue.

On Nov. 18, Park and his delegation visited the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facility in College Park, Maryland. Mr. Tim Nenninger (NARA official) briefed Park and his staff on the National Archives and Records Administration and gave them a tour of the facility. In addition, Mr. Herb Artola from DPMO, assisted with the visit at NARA, and was present to greet and guide the ROK delegation when they arrived at the facility. Following the NARA visit, Park and the ROK MND delegation visited Arlington National Cemetery and laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Later that afternoon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Winfield attended a meeting between Park and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy chief of staff, Mr. Pete Verga, to discuss Korean War personnel accounting. Following the meeting, the ROK delegation enjoyed a tour of the Pentagon led by Lt. Col. Chun Ho Learn (DPMO). After the tour, the ROK delegation traveled to DPMO Headquarters and ended the day with a meeting on Korean War personnel accounting hosted by Winfield. Winfield and Park agreed to form a combined MND/DPMO working group to recommend ways to enhance and strengthen the relationship between DPMO and the MND.

On Nov. 19, 2013, the ROK MND and DPMO staff met to follow up on subjects discussed at the meeting the day before. The two staffs agreed to work on a plan to revise and strengthen the existing DPMO-ROK MND Memorandum of Arrangement to cooperate on Korean War personnel accounting. This includes U.S. and ROK personnel and Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army (KATUSA) personnel associated with the Korean War. The overall goal is to improve cooperation and to prepare a new arrangement for signature at the next annual meeting in 2014.



DASD Winfield (right) takes notes during a meeting with South Korean officials Nov. 18-19, 2013 at the DPMO. The meeting was established to strengthen ties between the U.S. Personnel Accounting Community and South Korea.

Photo by Master Sgt. Mike Arrowsmith

USS OKLAHOMA working group

On Dec. 17 and 18, a DoD working group met to discuss the feasibility of disinterring and identifying the unknown remains associated with the 387 service members unaccounted for from the battleship USS OKLAHOMA, which capsized after being struck by torpedoes during the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. From 1942 to 1951, the USS OKLAHOMA was righted, and the unknown remains of the crew were recovered and buried in 62 caskets in 46 locations at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the "Punch Bowl." In 2003, JPAC disinterred one casket to identify the remains it held, which led to the identification of five USS OKLAHOMA sailors. Scientific analysis discovered the casket also contained the comingled remains of approximately 100 other sailors. The scope of the problem is much bigger than anticipated. The current working group is comprised of experts from the Army, Navy, JPAC, DPMO, Office Secretary of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. JPAC presented its proposed plan for the USS OKLAHOMA disinterment. The members agreed that the modified plan was feasible, marking a first step in the decision process. From here, DPMO will finalize the details of the plan and shepherd it through the DoD decision process.



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2000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-2600

Herb Artola retires



After 11 years of dedicated service, Herb Artola has retired from DPMO.

Herb joined DPMO in August 2003, and volunteered to be the primary researcher for the Northeast Asia division. He assisted the JPAC investigation teams and the lab by providing POW debriefings and War Diaries obtained from NARA. During his tenure at DPMO, he scanned more than 25,000 documents for DPMO and JPAC, briefed more than 500 families during Family Member Updates and interviewed more than 300 Korean War veterans for information on POW/MIAs who were lost during the war.

He was a key asset within DPMO and aided the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in negotiations with China, Democratic People's Republic Korea, and South Korea. He also assisted with Joint Field Activities and Punch Bowl disinterment reviews.

Herb's willingness to help and dedication to the mission will be missed at DPMO.

Phil O'Brien retires



After 19 years of service, Phil O'Brien has retired from DPMO.

In 1995, Phil O'Brien joined the DPMO team working as a research analyst for the Korean War Division. He was later assigned to locate information on all of the POW camps that existed during the Korean War. To accomplish this task, he compiled a raw POW list from the Army Graves Registration Services. Phil developed databases on 24 POW camps and their POW populations, which helped achieve fidelity on the deaths of more than 2,000 POWs, whom all still are unaccounted for.

The database developed by Phil is used today to assist briefing families and to provide JPAC information in their circumstantial lines of evidence for making identifications. Since he joined DPMO, Phil and his database have contributed to resolving more than 80 POW cases.

For your information

Family members seeking more information about missing loved ones may call their respective Service Casualty Office:

U.S. Air Force
(800) 531-5501

U.S. Marine Corps
(800) 847-1597

U.S. Army
(800) 892-2490

U.S. Navy
(800) 443-9298

U.S. Department of State
(202) 647-5470

SUBSCRIPTION UPDATE:

To "Go Green" and reduce cost, DPMO is focusing on digital distribution of *The Torch* instead of hardcopy mailings. Please send your email address to: outreach.DPMO@osd.mil. For those who cannot access *The Torch* via email or online, we will continue to mail it to your address as resources permit.